



**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

David S. Keller, Commissioner
Commissioners' Office
14 North Main Street
Chambersburg, PA 17201
717-261-3815
dskeller@franklincountypa.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Franklin County secures funding for service dog program for veterans

March 26, 2015 - CHAMBERSBURG, PA – The Franklin County Commissioners today executed an agreement to receive grant funding to establish a service dog program for veterans.

The Franklin County Veterans Affairs Office was one of 12 agencies statewide selected to receive a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA), through a competitive grant process. Franklin County Veterans Affairs will be awarded a grant of \$12,000, which they will utilize to initiate a service dog program.

This service dog program, Operation Save-A-Vet, Save-A-Pet, will provide service dogs to Franklin County veterans. While the details of the program are being finalized, it is anticipated that the program will identify, train, and pair 3-5 dogs with area veterans within the first year. Staff will contact local vendors who have expressed interest in participating with the program. Specific details of the program will be released at a later date.

"Justin Slep is on a mission, and the community is really taking notice!" said Commissioner Bob Thomas. Justin Slep, Franklin County Director of Veterans Affairs, joined the county in July 2014, replacing former director Bob Harris, who retired after more than 20 years of service. "I have seen Justin in action at events around the county. People are impressed with what he and his staff are doing," added Thomas.

Soon after joining Franklin County, the Commissioners directed Slep to expand the mission of the office. "Justin is making sure veterans receive whatever benefits they are entitled to, which has traditionally been the focus of our local veterans affairs office," said Commissioner Bob Ziobrowski. "Justin has expanded the office's efforts to reach out to veterans and the

###

For additional information on Franklin County visit www.franklincountypa.gov.

community at large to make sure veterans are aware of all the programs and services that are available to them. As a result, several local residents have come forth to offer to help veterans,” added Ziobrowski.

Operation Save-A-Vet. Save-A-Pet is an example of how the community is stepping forward to help.

Justin’s team in the Veterans Affairs office includes Lucinda Blevins and Jennifer Tucker. “They’re great to work with and are really committed to helping veterans,” said Justin.

“This is the second year that grants from the Veterans’ Trust Fund (VTF) have been awarded, and the first year that Franklin County Veterans Affairs has been approved as a grant recipient,” said Commissioner and Board Chairman Dave Keller. “It’s great that we are going to be able put some of the funds to good use here in Franklin County,” added Keller. The fund is made possible through those who donated \$3 when applying for or renewing their driver’s license or photo ID and/or renewing a motor vehicle registration, as well as proceeds from the sale of the “Honoring our Veterans” license plates.

#

For additional information on Franklin County visit www.franklincountypa.gov.